REMARKS

At the time of the Office Action of May 16, 2003, claims 17-24 and 42-67 were pending. Claims 19-45, 49-59, and 61-67 were deemed withdrawn, and not considered. Claims 17, 18, 46-48, and 60 were rejected. Herein, claims 18, 22, 42-45, 47, 56-59, and 65-67 are cancelled. Claim 17 is amended to include the feature of cancelled claim 18, and claim 46 is amended to include the feature of cancelled claim 47.

Claims 18 and 47, and 60 were rejected as obvious over a combination of Tada (USP 5548890) and Kubota (JP6204374). Claims 17 and 46 now include the features of claims 18, and 47, respectively. Hence, the particular rejections of the original claims 17 and 46 are moot.

With respect to amended claims 17 and 46, and claim 60, it is submitted that the rejection is improper because a person of ordinary skill in the art would not combine Tada and Kubota. The Examiner justifies the combination by stating that "it would be obvious to combine the process of Tada with the process of Tada because it would provide a highly reliable leadframe." This is hindsight, because although Kubota states in his abstract that his purpose is "to provide a lead frame which is high in dimensional accuracy and reliability," Kubota does not state that it is the difference in thickness between the outer portion of the lead and the inner portion of the lead that leads to this accuracy and reliability. Indeed, in Kubota's Figs. 3, 4, 5, and 6, there is no such difference in thickness. Hence, it is hindsight for the Examiner to substitute the leadframe in Kubota's Figs. 1b and 1c for Tada's leadframe.

Further, Kubota makes his leadframe by first stamping openings in the metal sheet 1, thereby defining the shape of leads 2, except for the transverse cut across the lead to form the "inner lead point," i.e., the very end of the lead. Subsequently, Kubota etches vertically partially through the central area of the metal sheet 1 to reduce its thickness to 1/3 of the outer

region thickness. At that point, Kubota makes transverse cuts by laser to form the inner lead point.

This provides two reasons why the combination of Kubota and Tada would not be made. First, Kubota has already patterned the long sides of his leads, rendering Tada's process unnecessary. Second, it is unclear whether, and if so how, how the reduction in thickness of part of the leadframe would affect Tada' patterning process. Given Tada's concerns about various stresses, this raises questions concerning the proposed combination.

In sum, it is submitted that the combination is hindsight, and that the claims should be allowed.

Respectfully submitted,

James E. Parsons
Attorney for Applicants
Reg. No. 34,691

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Date: 8/20/03 Signature: Rebecca Baumgartner